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YEUTTER, HILLS AND BOSKIN TO SPEAK AT USDA OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter will present the the keynote address, U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills will discuss the status of trade negotiations, and Council of Economic Advisors Chairman Michael Boskin will discuss the economic outlook for the 1990s at the opening afternoon session of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Outlook Conference Tuesday, Nov. 28, according to Assistant Secretary for Economics Bruce Gardner.

USDA plans to broadcast the opening day of Outlook '90, which begins at 12:30 p.m., on nationwide satellite, a first for the conference, Gardner said. The broadcast is planned to begin at noon EST over the Telstar 301 satellite (transponder 11 vertical, channel 21, downlink frequency 4120 Megahertz). Information on the downlink is available at (202) 447-5368.

Starting at 2:15 p.m. Tuesday, Secretary Yeutter will moderate a panel of congressional farm leaders on agricultural policies for the 1990's. The panel was originally scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 30.

An overview of 1990 farm prospects will begin at 3:45 p.m., including an economic forecast by Roger Brinner, DRI/McGraw-Hill's chief economist; the 1990 agricultural outlook, presented by USDA official James R. Donald; and farm trade prospects, presented by USDA's Deputy Under Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs Ann Veneman. The conference will adjourn for the day at 5 p.m.

On Nov. 29, concurrent sessions will be held between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Scheduled participants include South Dakota's Governor George Mickelson, speaking on rural development initiatives; Pete Carpenter, president of CSX Distribution Services; Reggie Wyckoff, president of the National Wheat Growers Association; Kenneth Bader, chief executive officer of the American Soybean Association; William Shanley, president and chief executive officer of the AmStar Sugar Corp.; and Hormel Meat Product's executive Scott Wallace.

The Nov. 30 sessions are scheduled for 8:15 a.m.-12 noon. Concurrent

sessions will cover farm finance and credit and the dairy outlook for 1990. The first plenary session will focus on the meaning for agriculture of global climatic and economic changes. Scheduled speakers include Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economic director Brian Fisher, USDA's Assistant Secretary Gardner and Deputy Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development Johnathan Kislak, who will discuss disaster protection.

During the final plenary session, from 10:30 to noon on Nov. 30, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Frank Young, Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator F. Henry Habicht II and USDA's Deputy Secretary Jack Parnell will discuss food safety and environmental concerns and their impact on agriculture in the 1990s.

For the first time, speakers at the Outlook Conference have been invited to submit their speeches for distribution via computer over USDA's Computerized Information Dissemination (CID) system. Speeches submitted for this service will be released at 3 p.m. on the date it is given.

To reach conference officials call (202) 447-5447 on Nov. 27 and (202) 382-6013 starting at 10 a.m., Nov. 28.

Registration is free. For program and registration details, including information on ordering audio cassettes of Outlook '90 and a printed proceedings and chartbook, telephone (202) 447-3050, or write Outlook '90, Room 5143-S, USDA, Washington, DC 20250-3900.

Raymond L. Bridge (202) 447-5447

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USDA AUTHORIZES INCREASED MARKETINGS OF BURLEY TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced that he is authorizing producers to market additional 1989 crop burley tobacco without incurring marketing penalties.

The secretary said that the maximum quantity of additional marketings a producer is allowed under today's authorization is an amount equal to 5 percent of the farm's basic quota. For example, a producer on a farm having a basic quota of 1,000 pounds and an effective quota of 16,000 pounds could market an additional 50 pounds of tobacco without incurring a penalty.

Under current law, the secretary has authority to encourage additional marketing of burley tobacco, up to 5 percent of the basic quota on the farm on which the tobacco was produced, to meet normal demands of export and domestic markets.

Yeutter said that the additional quantity of burley tobacco that is marketed under this authorization will be eligible for price support at the same level as other burley tobacco marketed from the farm and will not be deducted as an overmarketing when determining the farm's 1990 burley quota.

Producers may obtain additional information from their local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices after Nov. 28.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

CATTLE MAY BE SOURCE OF LIFE-SAVING BLOOD COMPONENT FOR HUMANS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27—Critical shortages in the nation's blood supply could be eased by a scientific technique that relies on the cow as a "universal donor," according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher.

Biochemist John R. DeLoach said pure hemoglobin can be extracted from cattle blood and easily stored. It could be used in humans for emergency transfusions, he said.

Hemoglobin's purpose in the blood is to carry oxygen to tissues throughout the body and remove carbon dioxide.

"Using this in people would be only an emergency, short-term solution, but it would provide time to find supplies of blood to match their blood type," said DeLoach of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

"You can freeze-dry it and it's stable for months at room temperature," he said. "To use it, you just put it in sterile water. Blood can be stored in a refrigerator for only 30 days. You can store frozen blood indefinitely, but to use it you have to add glycerine, and it takes at least half a day to get it thawed and ready to use."

He said the hemoglobin could be "especially useful in military field hospitals that have trouble storing blood."

DeLoach draws his hemoglobin from cattle because "they're just big

hemoglobin factories in one sense. Cattle are large, they're available in large quantities and their hemoglobin is relatively stable—in other words, it will carry oxygen well.”

Fear of AIDS has contributed to the current blood shortages in the United States because some prospective donors mistakenly believe they risk contracting the disease when they give blood. While there is no risk in donating blood, DeLoach said the use of cattle hemoglobin in humans would help eliminate the problem of transfusions of human blood that might be with viruses of AIDS or hepatitis.

DeLoach has tested his hemoglobin on rats, replacing 40 percent of the rodents' whole blood with ultra-pure cattle hemoglobin, without ill effects. Transfusions of more hemoglobin on the same rats three to four weeks later brought no adverse reactions. Also, tests in goats and rabbits caused no immune response.

Ultra-pure hemoglobin is not without its special requirements, DeLoach noted. “You have to convert the hemoglobin molecules into clusters so that the kidneys don't just filter them out,” he said. “We changed the molecular weight of our hemoglobin from 64,000 to 300,000 and have been able to detect the hemoglobin in the circulation for 14 days. Normally, a day and a half is the longest it would be in circulation.”

“The use of ultra-pure hemoglobin from cattle wouldn't pose a danger to humans,” DeLoach said. “Doctors have been using swine insulin in people without any danger, and they use swine valves in human heart operations. And this technique enables us to utilize a universal blood donor—right off the ranch in Texas.”

He said, “A grown cow has 28 liters of blood, and a liter of blood has 140 grams of hemoglobin. As far as the animal's well-being goes, taking the small amounts of blood we're talking about from a full-grown cow is no different from a human donating a pint of blood to a blood bank.” The technique involved in extracting the pure hemoglobin was developed by DeLoach and other researchers working independently. DeLoach began his work on the technique in 1980 while he was in Vienna, Austria, as a consultant on blood to the International Atomic Energy Agency. He is now research leader at the ARS Veterinary Toxicology and Entomology Research Laboratory in College Station, Texas.

“In Austria, I discovered you couldn't buy ultra-pure hemoglobin in any real quantities,” he said. “Also, the way it was being isolated and purified altered it so that it wasn't functional.”

DeLoach said the extraction technique improves both the quality and quantity of hemoglobin.

“We can isolate 300 to 400 grams of hemoglobin in one day with this system,” he said. “Our system can easily be scaled up to isolate larger quantities. Before, you might produce three to four grams of ultra-pure hemoglobin in a week.”

DeLoach’s technique has its roots in his earlier work on encapsulating drugs in red blood cells for slow release in the body. Cells are swollen in a reduced-salt environment until microscopic pores appear in the cells’ membranes, allowing the drug to enter through the pores. When the salt concentration is restored, the cells return to their normal size and the pores close.

“We had found a way to open the pores in red blood cell membranes, put something in and close those pores,” he said. “I envisioned that we should be able to take things out as well.”

To extract hemoglobin, DeLoach opened the pores of red blood cells, then passed the cells through a very thin porous fiber tube. Red blood cells themselves were too large to pass through openings in the fiber, but hemoglobin could escape.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR MEXICO

WASHINGTON, November 27—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 100,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to Mexico during the 1989-90 marketing year.

The marketing year for corn began Sept. 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

#

FGIS ADOPTS HARD AND SOFT WHITE WHEAT CLASSES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27-The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service today announced the amending of U.S. standards for wheat by replacing the single class "white wheat" with two classes, "hard white wheat" (HWW) and "soft white wheat" (SWW). The class SWW will have three subclasses, soft white wheat, white club wheat and western white wheat. The class HWW will not have subclasses.

The new classes will become effective May 1, 1990.

W. Kirk Miller, FGIS administrator, said, "These changes will provide greater consistency in applying the standards, make the standards easier to interpret, and facilitate trade in both hard and soft white wheats." Hard and soft endosperm wheats are marketed as separate products to meet specific enduse needs, and the changes address these needs, he said.

Miller also said public comments received from all segments of the wheat industry on the USDA proposal of the changes overwhelmingly supported the elimination of the single class and replacing it with the two new classes.

Notice of the changes were published today in the Federal Register. For more information, contact Lewis Lebakken Jr., USDA, FGIS, Room 0628-S, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, D.C. 20090-6454; telephone (202) 475-3428; telecopier (202) 447-4628.

Allen Atwood (202) 475-3367

#

USDA ADDS NEW MEDFLY QUARANTINE AREA IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—In a continuing effort to eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly from California, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has quarantined an additional portion of Los Angeles County. This brings the number of Medfly quarantine areas in California to five.

According to James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the discovery of four adult Medflies between Oct. 25 and Nov. 5 prompted the action, which quarantines approximately 12 square miles in the Sylmar area of Los Angeles County.

“The Medfly is one of the world’s most destructive pests of fruits and vegetables,” said Glosser. “Restricting the movement of fruits and vegetables leaving the quarantined area is necessary to keep the pest from spreading into non-infested areas.”

To eradicate Medflies in the area, the California Department of Food and Agriculture applied a malathion bait spray to 14 square miles surrounding the Sylmar infestation on Nov. 6.

APHIS and CDFA also have stepped up trapping activities in the area surrounding Sylmar, according to Glosser. Program personnel have placed more than 1,300 traps throughout the quarantined area and are checking them weekly.

In addition to the Sylmar quarantine, four other areas in California remain under quarantine for the Mediterranean fruit fly: Mountain View, Santa Clara County; Alto Loma, San Bernardino County; and Elysian Park and the Whittier/Valinda/Baldwin Park areas in Los Angeles County.

“Due to recent Medfly finds in the Alhambra and Rosemead areas and in North Hollywood, we anticipate that additional quarantined areas will be established in the near future,” said Glosser.

The quarantine became effective Nov. 17. Comments on the action will be accepted if they are received on or before Jan. 23, 1990. An original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket No. 89-202 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Rm. 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Caree Lawrence (301) 436-7280

#

USDA SOLICITS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON WHEAT STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comments on the U.S. wheat standards, including recommendations for changes, as part of an overall review of federal wheat inspection and grading regulations.

USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service is required under the U.S. Grain Standards Act to review all grain-inspection regulations periodically, assessing them for effectiveness, potential improvements and clarity of language.

FGIS Administrator W. Kirk Miller said specific items already scheduled for review under the standards for wheat include: the tolerance for stones in the definition of sample grade; the definition of unclassified wheat including red durum; the definitions of wheat of other classes; and the definition of contrasting classes. Miller also said FGIS is investigating the use of alternative testing methods as the basis of a future classification system.

Comments and recommendations are invited on these and all other aspects of the U.S. wheat standards, Miller said.

Comments must be received no later than Jan. 26, 1990, and may be submitted by mail to Paul Marsden, Federal Grain Inspection Service, USDA, Room 0628-S, Box 96454, Washington, D.C., 20090-6454. Telecopier users may send responses to FGIS' automatic telecopier machine at (202) 447-4628.

Notice of this review was published today in the Federal Register.

Allen Atwood (202) 475-3367

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 9.76 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 9.06 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 8.94 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.88 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$6.03 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$5.64 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$5.43 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Dec. 5, at 3 p.m. EST, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

USDA ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN LIVESTOCK FEED PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced changes in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corp. livestock feed programs which give livestock producers in disaster-affected areas more flexibility in receiving assistance for past and future feed purchases necessitated by the 1989 drought.

Effective immediately, livestock producers will have the choice of one of two options for computing eligibility and assistance.

Under the first option, producers may continue to receive assistance in accordance with procedures which have been in effect. These include:

- a maximum daily allowance of 10 pounds feed grain equivalent per animal unit per day;
- proceeds from insurance on crops will be considered in determining the amount of feed available for a producer's livestock and feed production loss;
- pasture and roughage will be counted as feed available if the producer has any livestock for which that type of feed is suitable;
- CCC will pay up to 50 percent of the cost of purchased feed, including hay, not to exceed 5 cents a pound to cover feed needs or feed loss, whichever is greater.

Under the second option, the following applies:

- the maximum daily allowance will be 12.5 pounds feed grain equivalent per animal unit per day;
- proceeds from insurance on crops shall not be considered in determining the amount of feed available for a producer's livestock or feed production loss;
- pasture and roughage shall not be considered as feed available for livestock, such as swine, if the producer elects to include as eligible livestock only livestock that do not normally graze or use roughage;

—CCC will pay up to 42.5 percent of the cost of the feed the producer has purchased, not to exceed five cents a pound.

All producers filing applications for livestock feed programs for 1989 crop year losses will be allowed to choose either option. Producers who have already filed can have their application recomputed using the new procedure.

As of Nov. 11, a total of 354 counties in 23 states have been approved to provide emergency feed assistance to livestock producers. Under the program, CCC assists producers who have suffered a significant loss in feed produced on their farms for their livestock due to a natural disaster.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

#

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR OCTOBER

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for October 1989:

Cost of food at home for a week in October 1988

	-----Food plans-----			
	(In Dollars)			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2				
(20-50 years)	45.00	56.60	70.00	86.80
Family of 2				
(51 years and over)	42.50	54.30	67.10	80.30
Family of 4 with				
preschool children	65.60	81.60	99.80	122.40
Family of 4 with ele-				
mentary schoolchildren	75.10	95.90	120.00	144.40

Chart continued on next page

Individuals in				
four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	11.90	14.40	16.80	20.30
3-5 years	12.80	15.70	19.40	23.20
6-8 years	15.60	20.80	26.00	30.30
9-11 years	18.60	23.60	30.40	35.20
Females:				
12-19 years	19.40	23.20	28.10	34.00
20-50 years	19.40	24.10	29.30	37.40
51 and over	19.10	23.40	28.90	34.60
Males:				
12-14 years	19.40	26.80	33.40	39.20
15-19 years	20.10	27.70	34.30	39.80
20-50 years	21.50	27.40	34.30	41.50
51 and over	19.50	26.00	32.10	38.40

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

Dr. James T. Heimbach, acting administrator of HNIS, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods, and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Heimbach said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” he said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family's food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a five or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617

#

USDA CONFERENCE TO SEEK IMPROVED RECRUITMENT OF HISPANICS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a regional Hispanic Employment Conference Dec. 6 and 7 at the University of Texas, Pan American University, Edinburg, Texas, to recruit potential employees of Hispanic heritage.

The conference is part of USDA's Hispanic Employment Program (HEP). The HEP's goal is to increase the percentage of Hispanics working for USDA.

"Hispanic U.S. citizens are underrepresented in virtually all USDA job categories, particularly in decision-making positions, compared with their numbers in the civilian workforce," said Adis M. Vila, assistant secretary of agriculture for administration.

This conference is the third of six such events planned for different regions where populations include high per-capita proportions of Hispanics.

Vila said the conference will be attended by USDA officials, representatives of universities and high schools with significant Hispanic enrollment, local Hispanic community officials, and Hispanic advocacy groups.

“This conference has been designed to impact on and have a positive effect on the increased employment of Hispanics,” said Vila. “We will specifically define procedures for contact between USDA and the region’s many sources of job candidates of Hispanic descent. Further, we will train USDA HEP managers to utilize these recruitment contacts so we can begin attaining equitable representation of Hispanics on the USDA employment roles.”

On Dec. 5, USDA will conduct a career symposium on the campus of McAllen High School, McAllen, Texas, to acquaint students with career opportunities in agriculture. The students will also meet and talk with contemporary Hispanic role models that also are successful USDA employees.

Vionette Tidwell, USDA’s national HEP manager, said the overall aim of the conference is to establish ongoing contacts between USDA and sources of job applicants, including placement officers at universities and high schools with a high enrollment of minority students.

“This conference will focus on Texas; however, the procedures we develop there will serve as a model for future conferences,” Tidwell said. “It’s a small beginning, but an important one which shows USDA is dedicated to equal opportunity in its employment program.”

Vie Tidwell (202) 382-1130

#

“HOW-TO” VIDEO TO HELP FARMERS MEET CONSERVATION DEADLINE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service and the National Association of Conservation Districts have produced a “how-to” videotape to help farmers carry out their conservation compliance plans under provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill.

“Over the next 5 years, we’ll be helping farmers carry out their conservation plans on nearly 140 million acres of highly erodible land. Many farmers will be doing the work themselves and we feel these tapes will be helpful,” said SCS Chief Wilson Scaling.

“With the December 31, 1994, implementation deadline for farmers to stay eligible for USDA farm program benefits, our SCS personnel still have an enormous workload. We appreciate the many farmers who will be applying their own conservation practices. We encourage them to call their local SCS or conservation district office first for information we feel may help in adapting the practices to their land.”

The hour-long tape, entitled “Conservation on Your Own,” features eight segments on widely used soil conservation practices: (1) how to measure and manage crop residues; (2) how to lay out contour lines and use field borders; (3) how to lay out contour buffer strips; (4) points to consider in contour stripcropping; (5) how to lay out wind strips; (6) how to control small gullies with grass; (7) how to plant and maintain a field windbreak; and (8) how to keep your terraces working.

Each SCS office in the Northeast, Midwest, and South will have a copy of the videotape by mid-December. In some states, particularly in the Midwest, the videotape will be available for loan from local SCS or conservation district offices, agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations. A similar videotape, adapted to western conditions, will be available in February 1990.

Diana Morse (202) 447-4772

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR UNKNOWN

WASHINGTON, November 29—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the following activity:

—Export sales of 105,664 metric tons of corn for delivery to unknown destinations during the 1989-90 marketing year: and

—Purchase from foreign sellers of 137,000 tons of corn for delivery to unknown destinations during 1989-90. A purchase from a foreign seller is a transaction in which a U.S. exporter contracts to buy U.S. produced commodities from a foreign firm.

The marketing year for corn began Sept. 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

#

NEW FOOD STAMP DEMONSTRATION PROJECT STARTS IN MARYLAND

BALTIMORE, Nov. 30—Nearly 4,000 low-income households in the Park Circle suburb of Baltimore will be able to buy food with plastic magnetic strip cards instead of food stamps. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services Catherine Bertini announced the innovation at today's kickoff ceremony for a joint federal-state-local Electronic Benefit Transfer System in Maryland.

“This new technology will benefit the programs and the people who use them,” Bertini said. “We hope that the new EBT system will be easier for people to use and will increase financial accountability and efficiency by eliminating the problem of lost or stolen food stamp coupons.”

Instead of receiving a check or food stamp coupons, recipients will be issued a plastic card to be used at a computer terminal at the grocery check-out counter. The cost of the food will automatically be subtracted from the household's total monthly food stamp allotment. In addition, food stamp recipients will, for the first time, be able to use the plastic card for other benefits, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and the Child Support Enforcement Program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service first tested the use of electronic benefits in Reading, Pa. in 1984. The project, which involved 3,400 households, received high marks from food stamp recipients, grocery stores and banks. An evaluation by FNS suggested that administrative costs could be lowered if future projects were tied into other welfare programs or were developed in conjunction with already existing commercial debit systems.

Bertini said, “From the test beginning today in Baltimore, and other

pilot projects scheduled around the country, we will be able to assess the cost-effectiveness of EBT and better analyze those issues which must be resolved with the new technology.”

Evaluation of this project will help determine the potential nationwide use of electronic funds systems instead of the traditional paper foodstamp coupons, Bertini said. Projects such as this will provide all those involved with the knowledge and experience needed to move this technology in the future, she said.

Phil Shanholtzer (703) 756-3276

#

USDA ANNOUNCES MODEL PROGRAM FOR POULTRY DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a new model state program to help prevent poultry diseases by emphasizing bio-security measures on the farm and during movement of birds.

“The program will help the poultry industry respond to outbreaks of disruptive diseases, such as avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease, as well as a broad range of other poultry diseases,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “It not only provides for preventive measures, but establishes methods for early detection and control should disease outbreaks occur.”

This voluntary disease control program was developed as a cooperative effort by industry, the research community, and state and federal governments. It is part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan, a voluntary plan created in 1935 to control poultry diseases transmitted by eggs or disseminated through hatcheries. The poultry industry, working with state and federal officials, has used the NPIP to control many egg-transmitted diseases such as pullorum, fowl typhoid and chronic respiratory disease.

The new model state program is designed to encourage broad participation. It places less emphasis on vaccination and medication as primary strategies for preventing and controlling poultry disease. Instead, it emphasizes sanitation, isolation of flocks during rearing, surveillance, early detection of disease, and prevention of disease spread. Unlike previous NPIP programs, it involves all segments of the poultry industry,

not just breeders and hatcheries. “The program is designed to prevent costly out-breaks requiring large-scale emergency operations like those used to eradicate exotic Newcastle disease and avian influenza in the 1970’s and early 1980’s. These outbreaks cost the federal government nearly \$120 million. The states and industry spent additional millions on these outbreaks,” Glosser said.

Any state cooperating with APHIS through a memorandum of understanding under NPIP may participate in the new voluntary disease control program. If eligible, the state would be recognized as either a “U.S. Poultry Disease Monitored State” or a “U.S. Poultry Disease Monitored and Controlled State.” Qualification for recognition in either category is determined by the state’s regulations and structure for detecting and diagnosing poultry diseases as well as for controlling the spread of poultry diseases within the state.

Participating states must enforce certain regulations for the intrastate and interstate movement of poultry and unprocessed poultry products. Movement is allowed with no restrictions if the participating state has no reported disease problems. Incoming shipments from nonparticipating states require state permits.

“I expect that states will be motivated to take part in the program since poultry will be able to move more easily across state lines during outbreak situations,” Glosser said.

The Model State Program for Poultry Disease Prevention is scheduled for publication in today’s Federal Register; copies are available from USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, Room 771, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782; telephone (301) 436-7768.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

#

UNITED STATES SIGNS NEW FOOD AID AGREEMENT WITH POLAND

WARSAW, Nov. 30—U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced that the United States has signed an agreement with Poland to provide that country with \$20 million worth of U.S. agricultural commodities. The announcement was made during a U.S. Presidential Economic Delegation to Poland which he headed this week.

The United States will provide Poland with \$10 million for vegetable oil (approximately 22,000 metric tons), \$5 million for rice (approximately 16,000 tons) and \$5 million for cotton (approximately 12,000 bales). The Polish government will sell these commodities in Poland for local currency. The funds generated from these sales will be used to support economic growth in Poland.

“The United States has long and strong bonds with Poland,” Yeutter said. “That is why the United States has made a national commitment to aid to the fullest the Polish people’s aspirations for greater economic freedom.”

Today’s agreement is authorized by Public Law 480, the Food for Peace program. Under the Title I concessional loan agreement, Poland has agreed to implement these self-help measures to support the Polish private agricultural sector:

- increase the availability of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, improved seed varieties, pesticides, herbicides, farm equipment and machinery to private farmers;

- provide credit to rural areas for private farmers, including owners of small holdings, and provide credit to rural entrepreneurs who serve rural communities; and

- facilitate the unification of farm holdings by permitting farmers to purchase properties adjoining their present holdings to improve the use of land and increase production.

This is the third agreement to be entered into as part of a \$100-million food aid package to Poland. Earlier agreements provided \$10 million under the Food for Progress Program for pork bellies and \$50 million under Section 416 for corn and butter.

Kelly Shipp (Warsaw 306-306)
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Media Advisory:

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

MEDIA ADVISORY

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter will head a U.S. Presidential Economic Delegation to Poland. The delegation will depart late today from Andrews Air Force Base.

Other senior administration officials leading the delegation are Secretary of Commerce Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr.; Secretary of Labor Elizabeth H. Dole; and Michael J. Boskin, Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisors. Additionally, there are 20 private sector members of the delegation.

The delegation is part of the administration's continuing efforts to assist in Poland's economic reform and restructuring and to support its democratic transition. The delegation will provide President Bush with recommendations as to the most effective use of U.S. assistance to Poland.

Scheduled events with media coverage include:

—Wednesday: arrival ceremony, Warsaw Military Airport.

—Thursday: working breakfast with minister of finance; delegation call on Prime Minister Mazowiecki; calls by private sector members on various ministers (Secretary Yeutter is scheduled to meet with the ministers of agriculture and rural life quality); delegation visits to specific points of economic interest (Secretary Yeutter is expected to visit farming operations); delegation call on Sejm leadership; dinner hosted by the Poles.

—Friday: visit to Gdansk/Gdynia; dinner hosted by the Americans.

—Saturday: delegation call on President Jaruzelski; press conference; return to United States.

Kelly Shipp, 447-4623.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service will brief the media on USDA's latest National Resources Inventory (NRI) from 10 to 11 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 4. The briefing will be held in Room 5219-S of USDA's South Building at 12th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.

John L. Evans, acting assistant secretary for natural resources and environment, Wilson Scaling, SCS chief, and Tommy George, director of the SCS Resources Inventory Division, will conduct the briefing.

The NRI, conducted every 5 years by SCS, provides national and state information on erosion rates, land use changes, conservation treatment needs, and other information on the status and condition of soil, water, and related resources on the nation's rural nonfederal land. The current NRI provides data from the 1987 growing season.

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